

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In response to the Office Action dated December 13, 2005, Applicants add new Claims 26-32 and provisionally elect, with traverse, Group I, Claims 1-7 and 26-32 for further examination on the merits in the present application.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Election Requirement because the PTO has not carried forward its burden of proof to establish that searching and examining all of the noted sets of claims would be an undue burden.

In particular, MPEP § 803 states:

If the search and examination of an entire application can be made without serious burden, the Examiner must examine it on the merits, even though it includes claims to distinct or independent inventions.

The claims of the present invention would appear to be part of an overlapping search area.¹

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully traverse the outstanding Election Requirement on the grounds that a search and examination of the entire application would not place a *serious* burden on the Examiner.

¹To do justice to either identified groups of claims, it is respectfully submitted that it would be necessary to search in all Classes and subclasses identified in numbered paragraph 1 at page 2 of the outstanding Official Action.

New Claims 26-32 have been added to set forth the invention in a varying scope and Applicants respectfully submit the new claims find support in the originally filed specification. More specifically, new Claims 26-32 are identical to original Claims 1-7 but have been rewritten as method claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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